YOU SENT LUKEN TO SPY ON ME? I THOUGHT HE WAS A GHOST OR AN OVERLY ATTACHED IMAGINARY FRIEND. HE'S ONE OF US?
NO. LUKEN VARGOS IS HUMAN. I FOUND HIM ALONE AND ON THE STREETS WHEN HE WAS VERY YOUNG.
HE NEEDED A HOME AND I NEEDED SOMEONE YOUR AGE TO GET CLOSE TO YOU. AND

BRING YOU TO ME. I ENCHANTED HIM SO THAT ONLY YOU COULD SEE HIM.
AND LOOK, IT ALL TURNED OUT PERFECTLY.
YOU TRICKED ME? HE TRICKED ME?
THE BOTTOM LINE

IS THAT YOU BELONGED WITH ME, NATALI, WITH YOUR OWN KIND.

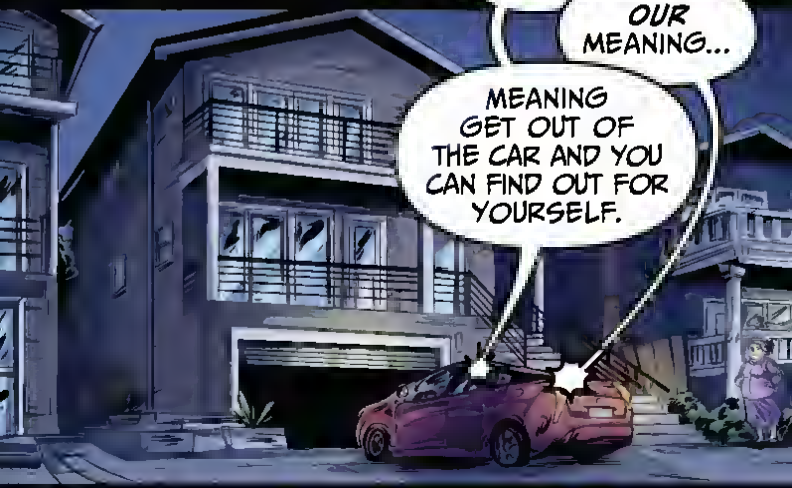
WE'RE HOME.

WOW! IS THIS YOUR HOUSE?

NO. THIS IS *OUR* HOUSE.

OUR MEANING...

MEANING GET OUT OF THE CAR AND YOU CAN FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF.



I WAS

I WAS HOPING YOU'D BE HOME SOON.

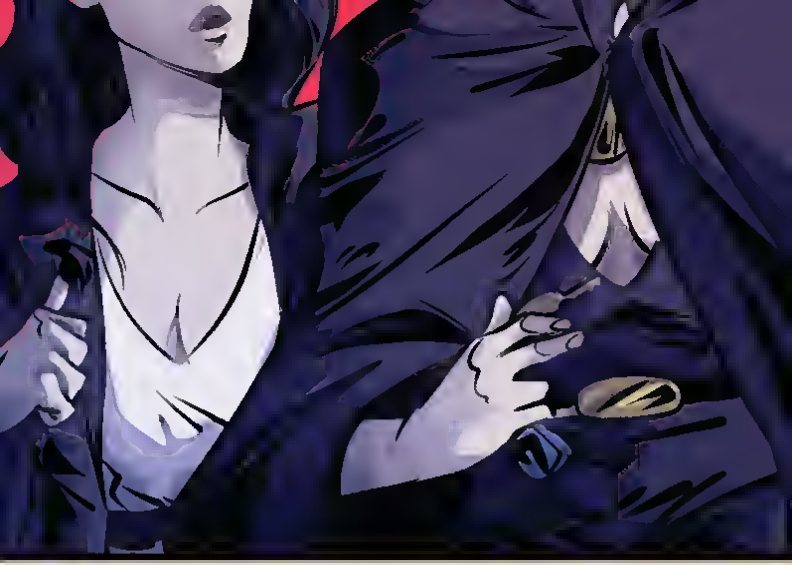
GOOD TO SEE YOU TOO MRS. CARTWRIGHT. EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?

HMMM... I'LL LET YOU DECIDE FOR YOURSELF. WHO YOU GOT WITH YOU?

MY NIECE. GOODNIGHT MRS. CARTWRIGHT.

WHO WAS

THAT?
MRS. CARTWRIGHT.
I GOT THAT FAR... AND...
AND... SHE'S OUR NOSY NEIGHBOR. WATCHES OVER THE HOUSE MORE FIERCELY THAN THE WALL-CREEPERS WATCH OVER THE GODDESS MARI'S CAVE *IN EDER.* BE CAREFUL AROUND HER.



WITH ONLY ONE WAY IN OR OUT OF EDER THROUGH MARI'S CAVE, WALLCREEPERS ARE THE GATEKEEPERS. THEY MAY LOOK LIKE SMALL, HARMLESS BIRDS BUT YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO CROSS THEM.

NOTED. BE CAUTIOUS OF THE NOSY NEIGHBOR.

LOOK AT THIS MESS. WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON THEM...
THEM?
FIND LUKEN. UP THOSE STAIRS. LAST DOOR ON THE LEFT. TELL HIM TO GET DOWN HERE. NOW.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO SOMEONE YOU HAVEN'T SEEN SINCE YOU WERE 8? SOMEONE WHO WAS YOUR BEST FRIEND?

AND WHO YOU JUST FOUND OUT WAS PRETENDING TO BE SAID BEST FRIEND TO TRICK YOU INTO RUNNING AWAY? OH YEAH. I KNEW WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY TO LUKEN VARGOS ALL RIGHT.

FIREBRAND

PROJECT 11

THE INITIATION OF NATALI PRESANO

CREATED AND WRITTEN BY
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LETTERS BY
Taylor Esposito

EDITORS
Tom Akel and Robert Napton

GENTLEMAN. I'VE ALREADY GIVEN THE CAR A ONCE OVER. THERE IS NO SIGN OF THE TWO MISSING KIDS.

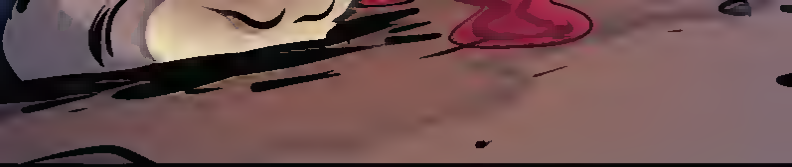
BETTER NOT HAVE CONTAMINATED THE CRIME SCENE.
JACK, WE DON'T KNOW IT'S A CRIME SCENE YET. FELICITY IS ONE OF MY DAUGHTER'S BEST FRIENDS. LET'S HOPE THEY JUST RAN OFF. CHECK THE CAR AGAIN. I'LL CHECK THE STREET.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DOOR? THE SEATTLE UNDERGROUND IS GENERALLY CLOSED OFF. EVEN IF A TOUR GOES IN OR OUT THEY LOCK IT BEHIND THEM. CAN'T HAVE HORNY TEENAGERS TURNING IT INTO A DEN OF INIQUITY.
I SAW THAT AND THOUGHT THE SAME THING. YOU GOING IN? BECAUSE I GOT YOUR BACK.

OFFICER RIGHT, MAYBE YOU SHOULD WAIT BY THE CAR.

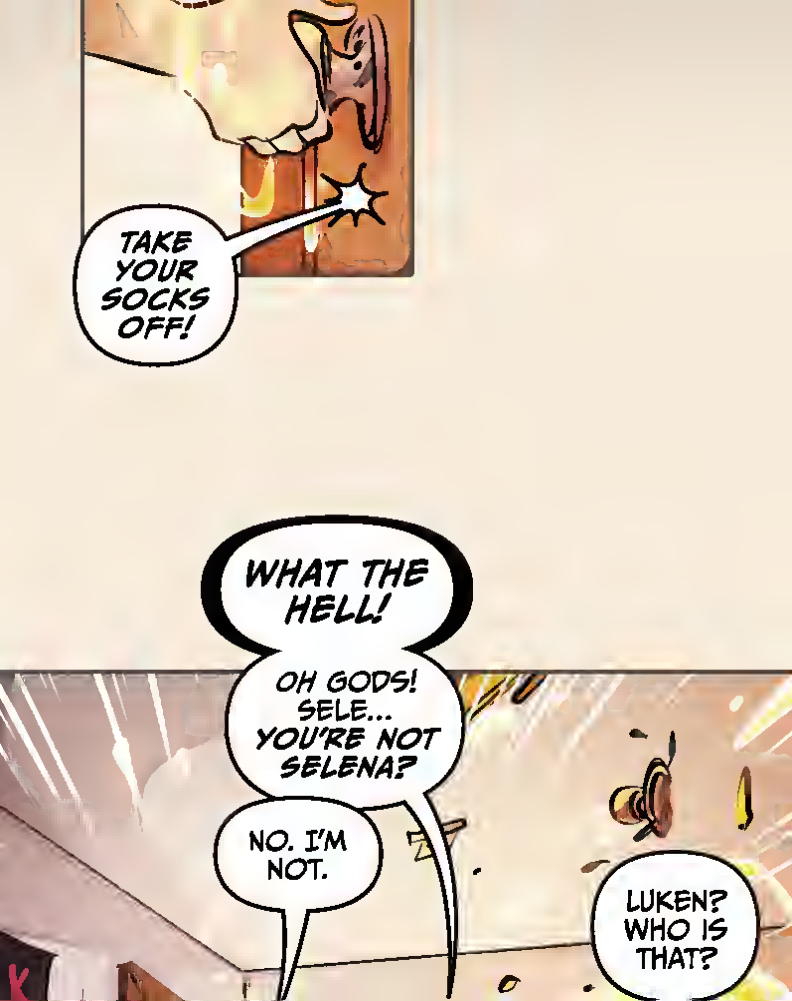
WILL, YOU BETTER GET DOWN HERE.

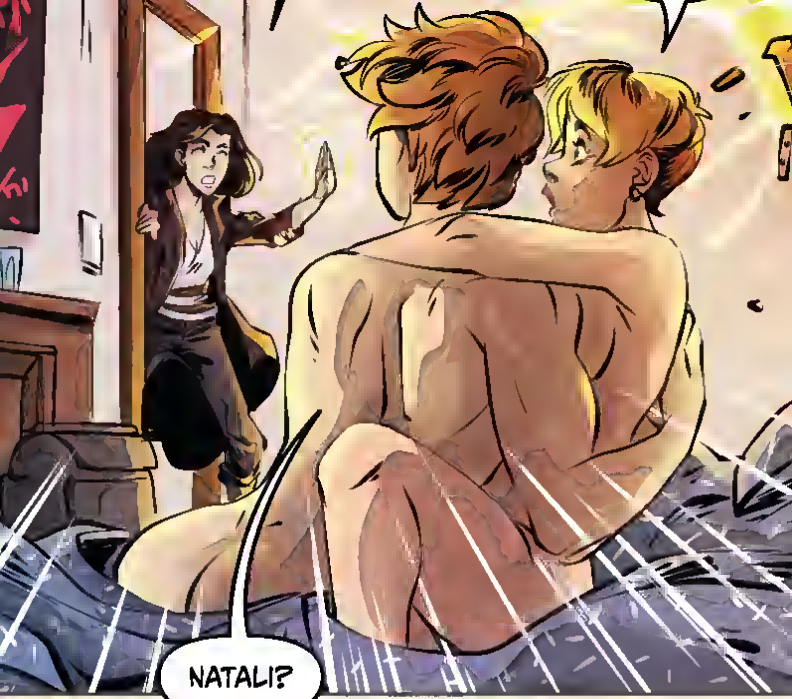
NOT GOOD...
:GASP!:
FELICITY!



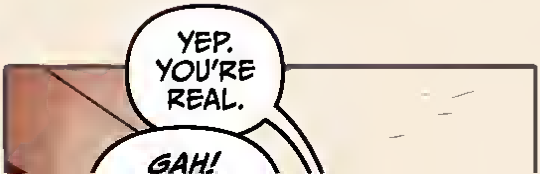
BACK AT NATALI'S HOUSE...

OH YEAH.
FOUND HIM...


TAKE YOUR SOCKS OFF!
WHAT THE HELL!
OH GODS! SELE... YOU'RE NOT SELENA?
NO. I'M NOT.
LUKEN? WHO IS THAT?

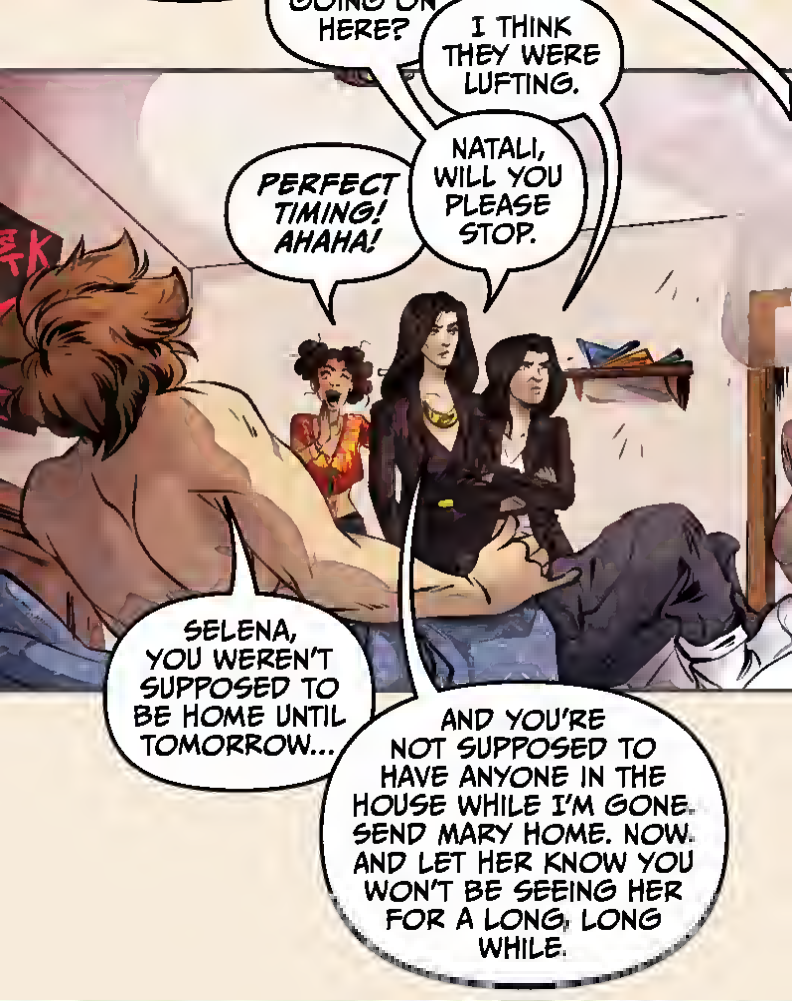

NATALI?

WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?


YEP. YOU'RE REAL.
GAH!

LUKEN, WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON? WHERE ARE MY CLOTHES?!

WHAT'S


GOING ON HERE?
I THINK THEY WERE LUFTING.
NATALI, WILL YOU PLEASE STOP.
PERFECT TIMING! AHAHA!
SELENA, YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE HOME UNTIL TOMORROW...
AND YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE ANYONE IN THE HOUSE WHILE I'M GONE. SEND MARY HOME. NOW. AND LET HER KNOW YOU WON'T BE SEEING HER FOR A LONG, LONG WHILE.

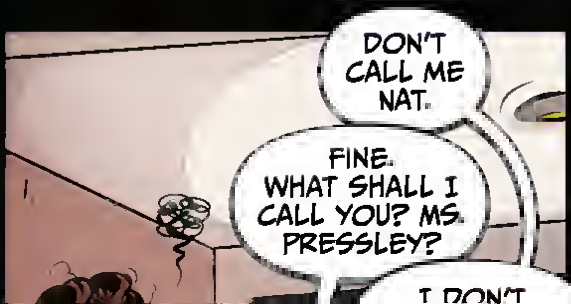
OOOOH... SOMEONE'S IN TROUBLE?
PREN, CLEAN UP THE MESS IN THE KITCHEN BEFORE YOU LOSE THAT PRECIOUS XBOX OF YOURS. AND, NATALI, BEFORE YOU ASK, PREN WILL EXPLAIN WHAT AN XBOX IS LATER!

AT THAT MOMENT, I COULDN'T CARE LESS WHAT AN XBOX WAS...ALL I COULD DO WAS STARE AT MY FORMER 8-YEAR-OLD BEST FRIEND...AND HIS SWEET ABS.

WHO'S SHE?
PREN, THIS IS MY NIECE AND APPRENTICE, NATALI.
SHE'S /KUZI/? SHE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE MUCH TO ME.

CAREFUL SPROUT. I WOULDN'T MAKE NAT ANGRY.
SPROUT?
NAT?

PREN, THE LIVING ROOM. GO.

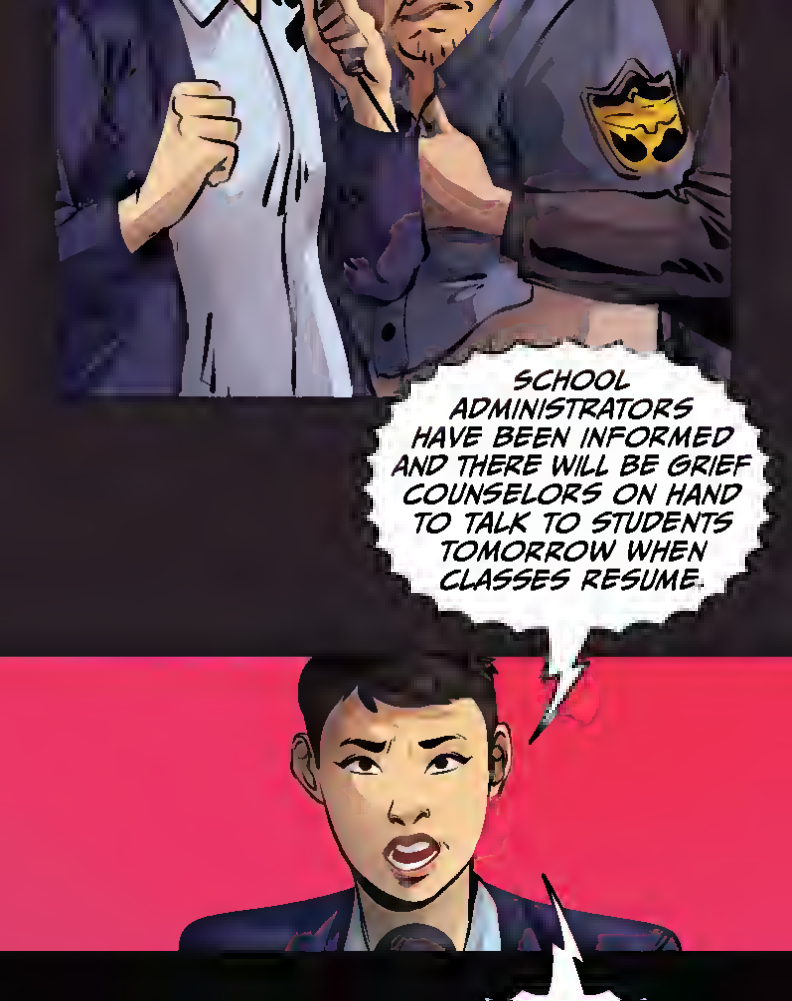

DON'T CALL ME NAT.
FINE. WHAT SHALL I CALL YOU? MS. PRESSLEY?

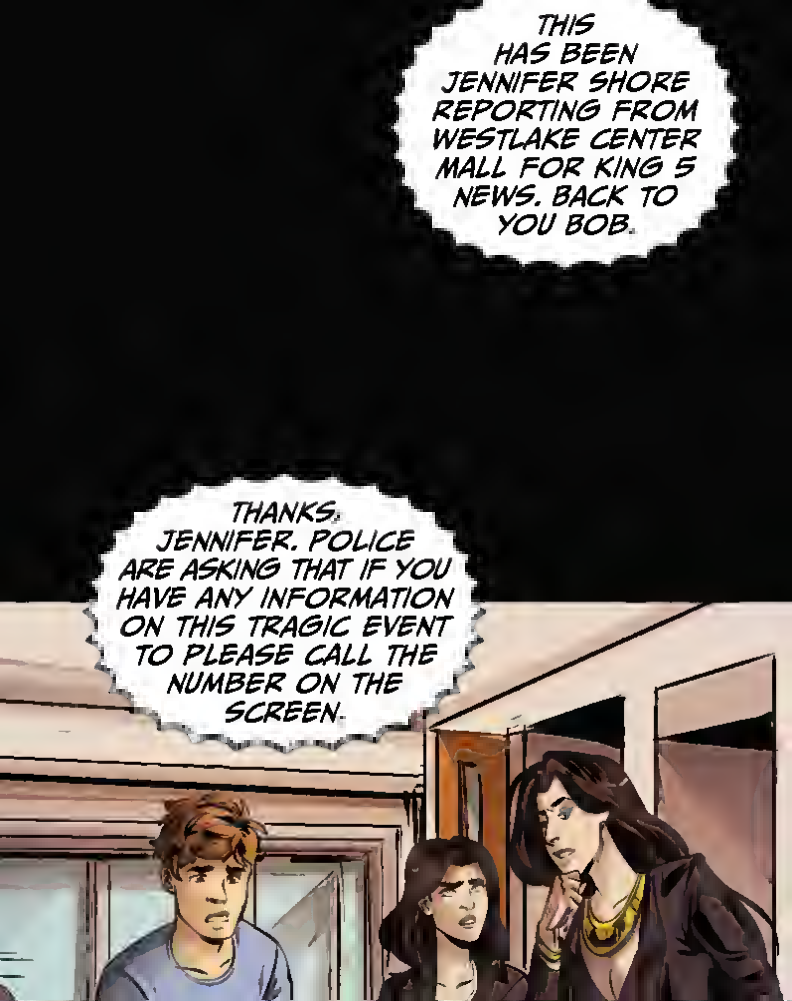
QUIET YOU TWO.

WE'RE COMING TO YOU WITH BREAKING NEWS. THE BODIES OF TWO TEENS HAVE BEEN FOUND IN A STAIRWELL NOT FAR FROM PIKE PLACE MARKET. ON THE SCENE IS JENNIFER SHORE.
THE TWO BODIES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS JASON WELLS AND FELICITY YUNG. BOTH JUNIORS AT BALLARD HIGH SCHOOL.
WITH ME IS OFFICER DAN

RIGHT. WHO TELLS ME HE FOUND THE BODIES. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE CONDITION YOU FOUND THEM IN?
FREAKIEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN. POOR KIDS.

WITH HOLES. EYES TURNED WHITE. FINGERNAILS BLA--
THAT'S ENOUGH OFFICER RIGHT...
THE CAUSE OF DEATH HAS NOT OFFICIALLY BEEN DETERMINED. AUTOPSIES ARE BEING PERFORMED.


SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS HAVE BEEN INFORMED AND THERE WILL BE GRIEF COUNSELORS ON HAND TO TALK TO STUDENTS TOMORROW WHEN CLASSES RESUME.


THIS HAS BEEN JENNIFER SHORE REPORTING FROM WESTLAKE CENTER MALL FOR KING 5 NEWS. BACK TO YOU BOB.
THANKS, JENNIFER. POLICE ARE ASKING THAT IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THIS TRAGIC EVENT TO PLEASE CALL THE NUMBER ON THE SCREEN.

JASON WELLS! I TOLD FELICITY NOT TO GO OUT WITH THAT DICK-HEAD!
I DON'T THINK IT WAS HER DATE THAT KILLED HER, PREN. HE'S DEAD TOO.
YEAH, OKAY. FINE. THEN WHO THE HELL WOULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
EYES WHITE, NAILS BLACK...
GUAJONA...

PRONOUNCED GWA'HONA. VAMPIRES. BUT THEY DON'T CONSUME BLOOD. THEY CONSUME HUMAN SOULS...

SEATTLE UNDERGROUND...

TWENTY THOUSAND. *BUT* THE BODIES HAVE TO BE BURNED BEFORE THE END OF THE NIGHT, *PONI*.
TWENTY-FIVE, *TXIKI*. AND I'LL HAVE IT DONE WITHIN THE HOUR.

FINE. I'LL HAVE TO GIVE YOU THE OTHER FIVE WHEN YOU GET BACK.

IT BETTER BE HERE.
DON'T THREATEN ME, IMP.
I DON'T NEED TO THREATEN YOU. EITHER THE MONEY'S HERE OR YOUR BOSS WILL FIND OUT HIS RIGHT HAND IS A SOUL-JUICE ADDICT, AND

THROUGH HIS CARELESSNESS IS ABOUT TO CAUSE US ALL TO BE EXPOSED TO THE IKUZI!
NEITHER HE, NOR I, FEAR THE LOCAL IKUZI.
HA...YOU SHOULD...

"...I HEAR SHE HAS A NEW APPRENTICE."

LEGENDARY